

Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 138

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 KINSHASA 5688

LIMDIS

FOR IMMEDIATE DELIVERY TO AF DAS WALKER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PMIL, CG, US

SUBJECT: ZAIRIAN MILITARY FORCES: SUGGESTED REFORMS

1. SUMMARY: THE MID-MAY EVENTS IN KOLWEZI DEMONSTRATED ONCE AGAIN THE NEAR-TOTAL INEFFECTIVENESS OF ZAIRIAN MILITARY FORCES. IN THE SHORT RUN THE SECURITY OF ZAIRE, PARTICULARLY SHABA, WILL REQUIRE EXTERNAL FORCES, PREFERABLY WITH SOME CONTINUED EUROPEAN PRESENCE. FOR THE LONGER RUN, A RADICAL REFORMATION OF ZAIRIAN ARMED FORCES WILL BE REQUIRED, AND THIS WILL CALL FOR A MUCH MORE SIGNIFICANT OUTSIDE ROLE THAN PREVIOUSLY EXERCISED IN BOTH TRAINING AND LEADING THOSE FORCES. END SUMMARY.

2. THE SHABA MILITARY REGION HEADQUARTERS WAS LOCATED AT KOLWEZI. THE CITY WAS DEFENDED THEORETICALLY BY THE ZAIRIAN ARMED FORCES (FAZ) 14TH BRIGADE OF THE KAMANYOLA DIVISION. NO EFFECTIVE RESISTANCE WAS DEMONSTRATED BY FAZ TROOPS WHO WERE DISORGANIZED AND APPARENTLY FLED WITHOUT A SIGNIFICANT STRUGGLE; SOME OF THEM REPORTEDLY JOINED THE INVADERS. SINCE THE ARRIVAL OF THE FRENCH FORCES, THERE HAVE BEEN NUMEROUS REPORTS OF FAZ LOOTING AND OTHER CRIMINAL ACTIVITY.

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3. SECTOR HEADQUARTERS, UNDER THE COMMAND OF GENERAL DIKUTA, SEEMS TO HAVE OFFERED SOME RESISTANCE TO THE ATTACKERS. ONE COMPANY OF THE 311TH PARATROOP BATTALION SUCCESSFULLY JUMPED NORTH OF THE CITY TO REINFORCE THE COMMAND POST. THE COMPANY THEN MOVED SOUTH TO JOIN THE REMAINDER OF THE BATTALION. WHILE THE 311TH PARACHUTE BATTALION (LESS ONE COMPANY) SUCCEEDED IN

SECURING THE KOLWEZI AIRFIELD AND HOLDING IT UNTIL THE ARRIVAL OF THE FRENCH AND BELGIAN FORCES, IT IS NOT AT ALL CERTAIN THAT THIS ACTION MET SIGNIFICANT ENEMY RESISTANCE. IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT THE BATTALION WHICH ACHIEVED SOME SUCCESS HAD UNDERGONE THREE MONTHS TRAINING BY FRENCH ADVISORS.

4. THE FAZ PERFORMANCE AT KOLWEZI IN 1978 RECONFIRMS THE REPUTATION ALREADY WELL-ESTABLISHED IN PREVIOUS YEARS, AND PARTICULARLY DURING THE 1977 SHABA WAR. SINCE 1960 NO SERIOUS EFFORT BY ANY DONOR NATION HAS BEEN MADE TO UPGRADE THE ZAIRIAN ARMED FORCES. CONSEQUENTLY, WITH ONLY MINOR AND ISOLATED EXCEPTIONS, ALL UPGRADING PROGRAMS HAVE MET WITH EXTREMELY LIMITED SUCCESS. THE RESULTS AT KOLWEZI WOULD HAVE BEEN VERY MUCH THE SAME IF THE ATTACK HAD COME ANYWHERE ELSE IN ZAIRE. SOLDIERS AND GENDARMES ARE OFTEN UNPAID AND FAR FROM HOME IN AN INTENSELY TRIBAL SOCIETY. EVEN IN PEACE TIME, THE ROADBLOCKS THEY MAN THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY ARE ESSENTIALLY EXTORTION POSTS FOR VICTIMIZING A POPULATION WHICH DREADS AND AVOIDS WHERE POSSIBLE THOSE IN UNIFORM. CONTROLLING AND HARASSING PEOPLE HAVE BECOME THE STANDARD FUNCTION OF MILITARY FORCES WHICH HAVE NEITHER THE CAPABILITY NOR THE WILL TO PROVIDE PROTECTION. ZAIRIAN FEELINGS OF ANTIPATHY TOWARD FAZ ARE SHARED BY THE EXPATRIATE POPULATION WHICH NO LONGER CONSIDERS THE FAZ EFFECTIVE PROTECTION FOR THEIR LIVES AND PROPERTY BUT ACTUALLY FEARS THOSE FORCES.

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FOR IMMEDIATE DELIVERY TO AF DAS WALKER

5. WE REGARD THE FOLLOWING AS NECESSARY SHORT-RUN MEASURES DESIGNED TO BUY TIME FOR DEALING EVENTUALLY WITH THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS OF FAZ. THERE IS AN URGENT NEED NOW FOR AN EXTERNAL

PEACE-KEEPING FORCE TO PROVIDE STABILITY AND REASSURANCE TO THE FOREIGNERS WHO ARE KEY TO THE ECONOMY AND WHO HAVE BEEN TRAUMATIZED BY KOLWEZI EVENTS. AFRICAN FORCES, ESPECIALLY FROM NORTH AFRICA, MIGHT FILL THIS PSYCHOLOGICAL NEED. HOWEVER, THERE IS A STRONG LIKELIHOOD THAT TO KEEP THE EXPATRIATE COMMUNITY IN PLACE THERE WILL BE A NEED FOR SOME CONTINUING WESTERN PRESENCE AS WELL. WE RECOGNIZE THAT SUCH A PRESENCE COULD INVOLVE POLITICAL PROBLEMS NOT ONLY FOR BELGIANS, FRENCH AND WEST IN GENERAL, BUT FOR GOZ AS WELL. NEVERTHELESS, WE BELIEVE THIS QUESTION SHOULD BE DISCUSSED WITH OUR EUROPEAN ALLIES; IN DOING SO, WE SUGGEST FOLLOWING POSSIBLE FORMULAS:

A. EUROPEAN ADVISERS TO BE INCLUDED WITH MULTI-NATIONAL AFRICAN PEACE-KEEPING FORCE;

B. BATTALION-SIZED BELGIAN/FRENCH (AND PERHAPS OTHER WESTERN) QUICK REACTION FORCE IN ADDITION TO AFRICAN PEACE-KEEPING TROOPS. THIS FORCE COULD BE STATIONED AT KAMINA, WOULD BE AIR MOBILE, AND WOULD CIRCULATE AS NEEDED THROUGH AREAS WHERE EXPATRIATES ARE CONCENTRATED.

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6. IN THE LONGER RUN, THERE MUST BE A FUNDAMENTAL RESTRUCTURING OF THE GOZ MILITARY FORCES. FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS, THIS RESTRUCTURING SHOULD BE A MULTI-NATIONAL EFFORT, PREFERABLY COORDINATED BY BELGIUM OR FRANCE. WHILE THE MISSION DOES NOT HAVE THE EXPERTISE TO PROVIDE DETAILED PRESCRIPTIONS, WE SEE THE FOLLOWING AS ILLUSTRATIVE OF AREAS WHICH NEED URGENT ATTENTION:

A) EMPHASIS SHOULD BE PLACED UPON A WELL-ARMED, HIGHLY MOBILE FORCE WITH EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS.

B) THERE SHOULD BE A HIGHLY TRAINED ELITE FORCE WITH SUFFICIENT AIRLIFT TO ACT AS STRATEGIC RESERVE.

C) STRATEGIC AND TACTICAL INTELLIGENCE MUST BE UPGRADED.

D) AN EXTENSIVE CIVIC ACTION/PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFORT SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN TO KEEP THE ARMED FORCES APPROPRIATELY OCCUPIED AND REHABILITATE THEM IN THE MINDS OF ZAIRE'S POPULATION.

E) RELIABLE EXPATRIATE LEADERSHIP WILL BE REQUIRED TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL, LOGISTICAL, AND OPERATIONAL CONTROL AS WELL AS LEADERSHIP. THIS SHOULD BE THE SUBJECT OF URGENT FURTHER STUDY, BUT SUCH INSERTION OF EXPATRIATE PERSONNEL PROBABLY SHOULD EXTEND FAR DOWN INTO THE COMMAND STRUCTURES. THE PRIMARY LONG RANGE OBJECT SHOULD BE TO FORM EFFECTIVE ZAIRIAN COUNTERPARTS.

F) UNDER EXPATRIATE ADVISORY PERSONNEL, A THOROUGH AND COMPLETE

INVENTORY OF EQUIPMENT IS NEEDED. THERE WILL THEN BE REQUIRED
AN URGENT PROGRAM OF REEQUIPMENT, WHICH PROBABLY SHOULD BE
ESSENTIALLY A GRANT AID PROGRAM. ANY SUCH PROGRAM MUST BE
CONTINGENT UPON EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION OF DONOR COUNTRY
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PERSONNEL TO ENSURE PROPER ACQUISITION, ACCOUNTABILITY,
COMPATIBILITY, USAGE AND MAINTENANCE.

7. A SEPARATE MESSAGE IN DATT CHANNEL GIVES OUR PRESENT
ESTIMATE OF GOZ ARMED FORCES STRENGTH, EQUIPMENT, AND DEPLOYMENT
(IR 6821-0085-78).
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